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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

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PROCUREMENT SECTION
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

MANAGEMENT COUNCIL CONFERENCE.....The next Management Council Conference has been scheduled for November 29 and 30 and December 1 in New Orleans. The NFC is making reservations for all participants at the Maison Dupuy Hotel. The Secretary has tentatively indicated that he will attend part of this Conference. Suggestions for items to be included in the agenda should be sent to Dennis Boyd as soon as possible.

CENTRAL HEATING PLANT SHUTDOWN.....The Central Heating Plant which supplies steam to the USDA complex will be shutdown from 6:00 p.m., Saturday, September 23 through Tuesday, October 3. This is a change from dates previously reported. During this period, there will be no steam or hot water for the cafeterias or the restrooms and cafeterias will offer only a cold food menu. GSA has suggested that agencies encourage use of annual leave during this period to minimize the impact and inconvenience to employees. (Contact: Pete Gagnon, O&F, ext. 75225)

USDA PRODUCTIVITY DATA.....The latest Bureau of Labor Statistics composite productivity report for the measured USDA elements, using 1967 as the base year, shows 1977 productivity at 119.4 percent. This represents an average annual increase of 1.9 percent. Labor input for these elements has increased 3.6 percent during this period while the weighted outputs have increased 23.7 percent. This increase in productivity makes possible substantial savings in personnel costs for the agencies measured.

The BLS provides all technical assistance and analytical support for this productivity effort. The Civil Service Commission has been assigned new leadership responsibility for promoting projects to measure and enhance productivity in the Federal government. (Contact: Ken Hatch, Management Staff, ext. 79895)

RECORDS MANAGEMENT AWARD.....Nominations for the Annual Federal Records Management Awards are due in the Office of Personnel by September 1. The awards, sponsored by the Association of Records Managers and Administrators and the National Archives and Records Service, GSA, were previously called the Paperwork Management Awards.

The purpose of the program is to honor employees who have contributed significantly to improved efficiency and reduced costs in records management activities. The Department is limited to one nomination and each agency may submit the name of one individual or a small group. Details may be found in Personnel Bulletin No. 451-272. (Contact: Mae Paulsen, OP, ext. 75618)

ASSISTANCE TO INDIANS.....Responsibility for coordinating the Department's assistance to American Indians has been transferred from the Assistant Secretary for Administration to the Assistant Secretary for Rural Development. For the past three and a half years, the Indian Desk in the Office of Equal Opportunity has performed this function. Assistant Secretary Mercure will now work through the Native American Task Force to improve agency services to the Indian community. This Task Force, created by Secretary Bergland last January, consists of the Assistant Secretaries for Rural Development; Conservation, Research and Education; Food and Consumer Services; and International Affairs and Commodity Programs. The Assistant Secretary for Administration retains responsibility for all civil rights matters concerning American Indians. (Contact: Richard J. Peer, OEO, ext. 77327)

OEO ANNUAL REPORT.....The Office of Equal Opportunity Annual Report has been distributed through agency civil rights coordinators. The report, which includes measures of minority participation in USDA programs in 1977, is intended for use of agency program and administrative officials in carrying out responsibilities to assure equal opportunity for all persons in accessing and participating in USDA programs. (Contact: Fred Hazelwood, OEO, ext. 74564)

MINORITY HIGHER EDUCATION.....A compilation of papers presented last spring at the Third National Conference on Blacks in Higher Education sponsored by the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education is now available. A total of 34 papers, including presentations by Assistant Secretary Wallace, CSC Commissioner Jules Sugarman, Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall, and Congressman Parren Mitchell, are included. (Contact: Percy Luney, OEO, ext. 74563)

USDA IMPLEMENTATION - P.L. 95-224.....The final USDA comments on the draft implementation guidelines for P.L. 95-224 (The Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977) have gone to OMB. Some of our comments will be reflected in the final guidelines which OMB plans to publish in the Federal Register in mid-August. Once these guidelines are issued, we will have until February 3, 1979, to apply the guidelines to Departmental programs and make any necessary changes in the legal instruments to be used (contracts, grants or cooperative agreements) for the respective programs. Those guidelines will require a report to OMB by March 1979 as to how implementation has gone to that point. GAO has also been prodded by the Comptroller General and Senator Chiles, Government Operations Committee, to monitor implementation of this Act within the Federal agencies. We have already been requested to furnish preliminary information to GAO regarding our cooperative agreements and how they are used. Additional requests for information are expected as the assigned GAO team becomes familiar with P.L. 95-224. Departmental implementation will be coordinated by the Office of Operations and Finance, Accounting Systems and Grants Management Division. (Contact: Don Manns, O&F, ext. 77251)

USDA CASH MANAGEMENT REVIEW.....The final report of the USDA Cash Management Review was issued in mid-July. In the first report to the President covering the Government-wide review effort, USDA's total realized or projected savings as a result of actual or recommended improved cash management practices amounts to \$16.8 million in FY 1978 and to \$30.3 million in future annual savings. The \$30.3 million is more than 50 percent of the total future Government-wide effort. Identified future USDA savings in interest costs to the Treasury as a result of good cash management practices in the USDA agencies reviewed are:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Savings Million Dollars</u>
FNS	7.8
FmHA	20.9
ASCS (CCC)	0.5
FS	0.1
REA	0.1
NFC	0.5
FSQS	0.4
SEA <u>1/</u>	<u>---</u>
Total	30.3

1/ Estimated savings of \$1.9 million not included due to uncertainty of Comptroller General decision regarding quarterly advances.

The Accounting Systems and Grants Management Division, Office of Operations and Finance, will be following up on the report recommendations in addition to considering further reviews for those agencies not included in the initial review. These major accomplishments would not have been possible without the continuing realization by Department financial managers at the responsible Staff Office and Agency levels of the need for good cash flow practices that result in reduced Federal borrowing with subsequent reductions in interest cost to the Federal Treasury. All are to be commended for their efforts. (Contact: Don Manns, O&F, ext. 77251)

FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS COUNCIL DECISIONS.....The Council recently handed down decisions involving the negotiability of union proposals regarding six areas of dispute between the American Federation of Government Employees, the National Council of Meat Graders and FSQS. The Council ruled that the issues dealing with protective clothing and payment for travel time did not conflict with applicable law and were negotiable. The remaining issues covering mileage payments, rates for use of private vehicles, the speed of conveyor chains, and the time to be provided to meat graders to perform particular assigned duties either violated applicable law or were outside the obligation to bargain and were, therefore, non-negotiable. (Contact: August Seeger, OP, ext. 76955)

